

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Park and Recreation Department
11th Floor City Hall
Monday, May 13, 2008
3:30 p.m.**

Present: Glen Dey, Bryan Frye, Matt Goolsby, Janet Miller, Tom Roth, Andy Solter and John Stevens

Absent: None

Also Present: Doug Kupper, Director of Park and Recreation; Karen Walker, Assistant Director of Park and Recreation; Larry Foos, Superintendent of Recreation; and Myca Bunch, staff.

President Miller called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. She introduced Matt Goolsby as the new Park Board member appointed by City Councilmember Paul Gray to represent District IV.

PUBLIC AGENDA

No Items.

REGULAR AGENDA

Item 1: Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion 1: On motion by Frye, second by Stevens, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the Board approve the April 14, 2008 Park Board minutes.

Item 2A: Dillons Proposed Expansion

Grant Tidemann, JP Weigand, 150 N. Market, Wichita, KS.

Mr. Tidemann provided aerials maps to each Board member and explained that during the past year they had negotiated a land trade between the Wichita Employees Credit Union (WECU) and the Dillons at 13th and West St. Tidemann said the owners of the Dillons would like to square off the land to the West of WECU as indicated in green on both maps. Tidemann presented two options, A & B, and explained that he would like the Board to sell a portion of the land located to the East of the Dillons store. Goolsby asked if the expansion could be done without purchasing the Park property and Tidemann

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responded that they could. He said the reason they want the land is to put gasoline on the facility and that it will go to the corner and parking would be removed.

Miller said the property was titled to the Board of Park Commissioners. She asked Tidemann if he would offer the Board an amount if they did decide to sell. Tidemann said he was open to negotiating a price or they could obtain an appraisal. He said if the Board went with Option B it would open up more negotiations with KAKE and the properties would then line up. Kupper said the land was acquired through Land and Water Conservation Funds in 1971 and 1972 and there may be complications due to the fact that the National Park Service paid for the land. Kupper said they will have to visit with the National Parks and Wildlife in Kansas, who administers those funds, and talk with them about the process needed to follow for use of the revenue they obtain from the sale of Sycamore Park. He said he has contacted the Deputy Director of Parks and Wildlife so they could start researching the process but he needs to know the Board's final decision before anyone can move forward.

Miller asked if there was a timeline for the expansion and Tidemann said that there was not.

Miller then asked if there was any audience members that had questions.

Dale Hellar, 2039 N. Gow, Wichita, KS.

Mr. Hellar asked the total square footage that each option would obtain. Tidemann replied that Option A was asking for 7,400sq ft. and Option B was asking for 25,000 sq ft.

Stevens asked what an acre of land in the area was currently running. Kupper referred the question to John Philbrick, Property Maintenance Department for the City of Wichita, who stated that he did not have an exact estimate but that it would most likely sell at the residential property price. He said he would have to see what else was being offered in the deal before a price could be determined. Miller asked Kupper what type of park amenities existed in the Park. Kupper replied that there was a playground and a few basketball courts. He said there are current plans to build a picnic shelter, which the Neighborhood Association requested, and there is a lot of open space good for kite flying. He said the cost to build the picnic shelter could possibly be around \$66,000 as that is the price they are paying to build a similar one at Chisholm Creek Park.

Stevens said he thinks the Board should receive an appraisal before they take action. Miller asked Philbrick if he could do that and Philbrick replied that he could if the Board decided to pursue the deal. Stevens said the value of the land is an important factor in making the decision and he would like the estimate before they decide. Kupper said they do not normally put a lot of staff time into determining appraisals and such unless they know that the Board is truly interested in the idea and concept. He said if the Board directs staff to pursue this concept their next step would be to continue working with property management staff.

Miller said she notified the Neighborhood Association President, Christine Eberly, and informed her of the proposed action and the Board has the option to table the item until they receive further input from the Neighborhood Association. Miller also said the Board could agree to ask that Philbrick provide a ballpark estimate at the next Board meeting.

Dey asked if there would be any possibility of future encroachment into the park. Tidemann said that he did not foresee that happening.

Frye asked if the intended use on the Far East side of the property would continue to be used for parking and Tidemann replied that it would. Frye asked if the proposed park shelter was due to be built soon to which Kupper replied he did not believe that the CIP money had yet been initiated but there is projected funding for the project. Kupper said money could go toward other amenities such as a water park or walking/bike paths. Kupper also stated that the park was around 13 acres.

Miller said she would normally be the last one to ever advocate the sale of park land but that she was willing to explore this concept to the next stage.

On motion by Miller, second by Stevens, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the Board explore the idea of selling either Option A or B as outlined by the proposal from Grant Tidemann and that City of Wichita Property Management staff help obtain an appraisal of the land. The Board also asked staff to continue talks with the Land and Water Conservation group to determine any technicalities in replacing the land. The Board then asked the Neighborhood Association to report back to the Park Board with their feedback. The Board asked that the topic be represented to the Park Board in June.

Item 2A: Pocket Park Plan and Donation – Habitat for Humanity

Linda Stewart, 420 E. English, Wichita, KS

Linda Stewart, Director of Habitat for Humanity, explained they are attempting to build 16 homes in 2008 to help families that meet the income criteria. She said all homebuyers attend homebuyer education classes before qualifying for a Habitat Home.

Stewart said they have had hopes of developing a pocket park within the Habitat Village for a long time and have now found a donor who has committed an additional \$56K toward the construction of the park. Stewart said she has researched the different types of playgrounds and they have decided to go with the bid they received from Athco, LLC.

Stewart said they would like the Park Board to partner with a \$15,000 matching grant and they would in-turn donate the park back to the Park Department when complete for proper upkeep and maintenance.

Solter asked if there were funds that could be made available to make the project happen. Kupper said it may be within their reason to request those funds be made available for project of this nature.

Frye asked if the park would be owned by the Board of Park Commissioners or the Park Department. Kupper replied that land can no longer be donated to the Board of Park Commissioners and all land that they currently own are those parcels that were purchased before the rules changed. Kupper said that as of 1990 any land acquired for park purposes must be decided upon by the Park Board before it can be sold.

Frye asked if there were any landscape requirements that each homeowner must maintain. Stewart said they plant 4 bushes and 1 tree to every house they build.

Stewart said the Park Board's decision is the only aspect needed before they can begin the development of the park and they would like to begin sometime in July.

Solter said he felt that a new park Request Form should be completed to keep with the guidelines that the Board developed during the last park request in 2007. Miller said she would also like to know the annual maintenance costs for the upkeep of the park. Goolsby asked what type of grass would be planted and Stewart replied they would put grass seed down before donating it back to the Park Department and those costs are included in the estimate.

On Motion by Solter, second by Frye, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that Habitat for Humanity complete a new Park Request Form and present it to the Board for consideration at the June 9, 2008 meeting.

Item 2C & 2D: Mayor's Challenge and Signs

Richard Schodorf – 1919 N. Amidon – Sunflower Title

Mr. Schodorf explained to the Board that he became the President of Sunflower Title with the caveat that they put \$30,000 dollars aside for two projects he wanted completed within the City. The first project is that he would like to pay for the signage of all trails within Sedgwick County. Schodorf said he thinks the City has incredible trails but they just need to be marked with proper, visible signage. He said Sunflower Title is willing to make a deal where they would cover all costs associated with the signs and they would also sign an agreement with the City stipulating they are to provide all maintenance and up-keep on the signs.

Schodorf said he had three different types of signs planned. The first is a cement marker that would be placed every ½ mile throughout each trail. The markers would be color coded to distinguish between the different trails and would cost about \$250 for six for a total around \$10,000.

Schodorf said they are offering to buy the signs and then give them to the Park Department. Schodorf said provided an example to each Board member with the proposed verbiage of "Exercise Opportunity" but stated it could be changed.

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Schodorf said each of the upright signs will have a protective cover that can be removed and cleaned should they be spray painted. He proposed three different sizes of signs for placement throughout the City. The bigger signs would be placed in a spot visible from Kellogg and other major thoroughfares. Schodorf said each of the signs would have small holes in the corner to place flags or banners to notify citizens of special events, etc.

Schodorf then said his second idea is to host a Mayor's Challenge. This event is aimed at getting the community outside and walking/exercising. Schodorf said he spoke to Prevention Magazine and they agreed to cover the event if they host it in Wichita. He said the Mayor's Challenge would be held in September and he would like to have some or all of the new signs in place at that time. Schodorf said he spoke with most City Council members and the Mayor and they agreed to support the event.

Dey said that he did not feel most citizens would be attracted to the word "exercise" on the signs and suggested it be changed. He said that in Grove Park they connected the middle portion of the paths and set it aside for elderly individuals and those with disabilities of any type who need a protected area to walk apart from bike riders and runners. Schodorf said he agreed and that Miller had also mentioned doing a "young walker" type of program, as well.

Frye asked which trails the \$30,000 would cover. Schodorf explained the ground markers would be placed along K-96, Canal Route, the entire River Walk, Swanson Park, Pawnee Prairie Park and Chisholm Creek Park. He said the other signs would be placed along K-96, the River Corridor, Swanson Park, Pawnee Prairie Park and Chisholm Creek Park. He said he would have to coordinate with the Park Department to determine the best location to place the largest signs.

Miller asked if the installation of the signage was imperative for the Mayor's Challenge to take place. Schodorf said the Mayor's Challenge will take place sometime in September or October and not having the signs in place by then will not negatively affect the event.

Schodorf said the Canal Route Path will be a bit of a challenge as they have to figure out how to pay for the installation. He said he approached the Boy Scouts to help install the cement markers and they expressed enthusiasm about helping. He said that once the signs are approved the sign company said they could have all the signs in place within 48 hours throughout the City.

Frye asked what division in the City handles signs and codes. Kupper said the Park Department installs their own signs and other signs around the city are handled by the City Engineering Department. Kupper said this idea would have to be brought before the design council for approval and they are required to meet all City sign regulations. Schodorf said he planned to meet with the design council in later in May.

Kupper said Schodorf should present his concept to the design council and then the Park Department should take their recommendation to the City Council.

On Motion by Frye, second by Roth, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to recommend support for the concept of having Richard Schodorf of Sunflower Title, fund and install cement markers and signs through the City trails and pathways. The Board also recommended that Schodorf visit the Design Council to obtain their approval of the proposed signs and report back to the Park Board with their recommendations.

On Motion by Miller, second by Roth, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the Board hereby endorses the proposed Mayor's Challenge event to be held in September of 2008.

3A: 13th St. Project

Miller reminded the Board that the construction on 13th St. near MacDonald Golf Course was originally presented to the Board in March. At that time, the Board asked the Engineering department to visit the District Advisory Board to obtain their comments and recommendations on the project.

Gary Janzen, City of Wichita Engineering Department, explained to the Board their current plans for widening 13th St. to accommodate the 20,000 vehicles that travel the road each day. He said their plans are to put in a 5th (middle) lane which will require widening the street. Janzen said in order to complete this project they need to buy some of the properties on either side of the road and they are attempting to purchase residential properties before they go to the businesses.

Janzen said the area adjacent to MacDonald golf course is another area they would like to purchase. As of right now they have no federal funding for the project and the estimate to buy all of the property on the North side (residential properties) is around \$1 million. In an attempt to save money for the tax payers, Engineering would instead like to purchase the land from the Park Board on the South side of the road.

Janzen said that in return for the sale of the park land, the Engineering Department could possibly purchase new fencing for the Golf Course to replace the badly worn fence that is currently in place. Pictures of several types of fencing were shown along with the price for each. Haas said the fence along 13th St. is 1,500 feet and that each of the DABs voted to have the wrought iron fence with the stone columns priced at \$70,000.

Janzen said there has been speculation of a bike path being placed in this area. He said the area is so cramped that there is not room to do so and the proposed Red Bud Trail should serve as a good alternative when it is constructed in the future. He said that Engineering is proposing a 5ft. sidewalk between each ROW line but that they have to make room for utility poles, also. He said their goal is to keep pedestrians away from the traffic. If a bike path were to be put into this area, Janzen said they would like to have a 10ft wide multi-use path and that is not possible in this area.

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Janzen said that when he spoke to the Neighborhood Association they expressed their concern and wishes to open the area up and make it safer for kids and pedestrians. He said they are looking at having 84ft from each ROW line.

He said the plan was developed by the WMAPO and they are trying to address vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic on each street within the City. He said as part of the SMART street concept the area around 13th St. does not meet the guidelines.

Toward the Mt. Vernon area they are beginning construction and are placing bike paths that will serve as a direct connection to the River and hopefully someday will connect to the East side of town. Janzen said he mentioned this so the Board knows they do look at their projects with bike paths in mind, but that putting one on 13th street is unsafe and does not make sense.

Haas said they would fund all changes to the light signal in that area when and if needed. He said the signal in that area has to be warranted and with the hill in the area it does not allow drivers enough time to stop. A study of the area would have to be done to see if placing a pedestrian crosswalk in the area would be warranted. Dey said they need to look at the interests of the elderly in this matter, too. Haas said that Engineering is looking at ways to improve the visibility in this area.

Solter asked how many trees would be removed from the Golf Course area. Haas replied that a total of 15 trees would be removed and then showed the Board slides of the area indicating where the new fence line would be placed.

Janzen said they may be willing to trade some land with the Park Board. He said there were several properties on the East side of the road that they may be able to buy and possibly use for Park property at some point in the future.

Miller said the cost comparison is not equal to what they are being offered. She said a good example is that Dillons recently paid WECU \$15.50 per sq/ft for the land they acquired. Stevens asked if there was a possibility of putting new fencing down both sides of the Golf Course. He said the whole fence looks horrible and that placing the new fencing around the whole course would really improve the look of the park. Janzen asked if they were talking about the fence on Roosevelt and Stevens replied yes. Goolsby said he felt one type of fence should be used throughout the park. Miller said that one option would be to place the wrought iron fence or coated wire fence around the park but only use the stone columns along 13th St.

Janzen said they are looking to save the tax payers as much money as possible but also said there has to be a way to meet somewhere in the middle to accommodate both the citizens and the Board's wishes.

Miller said the decision here sets a precedent for Parks and that people are always trying to use Park land for other reasons and they have to remember that the Board has to look at each request thoroughly. She said there has to be a compromise and that the \$250,000 is a good start but maybe there are further things that could be done.

Miller asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience.

Kim Hamlin, 547 N. Yale, Wichita, KS

Ms. Hamlin spoke to the Board and said she is currently the president of the Sleepy Hollow Neighborhood Association. She said there are actually two parks in the area that will be affected by the construction, the other being Sleepy Hollow. She said they are very concerned about the drainage situation and have begun working with the Kansas State Landscape Architect in hopes of dealing with drainage problems. She said that she encourages the Board to keep the design team on track to deal with these issues and ensure that they are fixed properly.

Larry Ross, 2716 E. Douglas

Mr. Ross said he recently attended a Park Board meeting where it showed the 13th St. proposal and he left feeling that it was considered just another project. He said the 13th St. traffic is very fast and the proposed changes will only make it worse as there is a history of neglect and intentional disregard for anything but vehicular traffic. He said Engineers rarely look at these projects in terms of all modes of transportation, but only from the aspect of automobiles. He said he has tried to cross 13th St. and Roosevelt via bicycle several times and it is not easy to do as the line of sight is very poor from both directions. He said no one is thinking about the long term situation.

Leslie Hicks, Engineering Dept, City of Wichita

Ms. Hicks said she currently works in the Engineering Department and her professional background began in Park and Recreation. She said when the process began her first thought was to improve the park and work around the limitations from the state. She said when she began to look at the design she looked at the past studies that were done and it referenced where 13 St., from I-235 to Oliver, had been identified as an arterial road that needed special enhancement and improvement to ensure its future viability in terms of structural integrity, marketability, and community cohesiveness. She said she centered on the community cohesiveness aspect and started looking at ways to make the road better for pedestrians and automobiles. Hicks said there are pros and cons of the project but that the original intent has always been to work for community cohesiveness.

Stevens said he did not blame anyone from engineering but that they have a responsibility to enhance the park and neighborhood. He said he did not feel that the Park Department should have to pay for the improvements and that Engineering could probably find the money to pay for the fencing. Stevens said they are saving the City a lot of money by giving them the Park property instead of having them go after the businesses on the North side of the road but that that the Board needs to be compensated adequately. Dey said that there will be money coming in from the property taxes from the businesses on the North side of the road that are not being purchased that could be used toward park improvements.

Dey provided each Board member a map which identified the connections from Grove Park which runs down I-35 to McAdams Park, completing the K-96 bike trails that are intended to connect with the other bike trails within the City. Dey indicated that the bike lane or bike/pedestrian sidewalk along 13th St to McAdams Park would give access to 13th St. neighborhoods to the trail system. He said they have no connector right now which is a major concern to him. Dey said they are using rush hour traffic as being the primary means of concern but they are not accounting for the bikes that have to stop to cross traffic. He said the other area located on the map was of a study they did for an application for a bike trail in terms of taking the census data and figuring in the racial and economic make-up of the area. Dey said that when they plugged those numbers in, on the basis of if they are able to increase the exercise by 5% of the population, the annual return would be \$990,000 per year in reduced health care costs. Dey said this is a hidden dimension that no one talks about.

Dey said most other southern Cities have provided plenty of public transportation except Wichita, leaving the lower economic class citizens no alternative, such as trails, to move people back and forth.

Janzen said signalized cross walks costs around \$75,000 plus annual maintenance but that it would not make sense to put the crosswalk signal in this location. He said the safety of the citizens is their priority and they cannot simply put a signal there unless it is warranted and safe.

Dey said even if Engineering does not act on or do anything with the idea of the Bike Lanes on 13th St. they need to keep it in mind for future development ideas.

On Motion by Frye, Second by Solter, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that staff take a critical look at the current fencing around MacDonald Golf Course with the idea of replacing it with wrought iron fence and stone column corners at 13th and Crestway and again at 13th and Roosevelt. It was also asked that staff look at using chain-link PVC fence in additional places to reduce costs. Staff was also asked to look at and provide costs for trees and shrubs to obtain a price agreeable and receptive to all parties involved. The Board asked that all parties examine the street design and indicate concern about meeting the goals and aspects of the WAMPO document to ensure the safety of cyclists and pedestrians.

Janzen said they would look at the entire perimeter fence but he is still not sure what they should do when it comes to design considerations based on the WAMPO document. Dey said he would like them to look at all considerations to make it safer for pedestrians to cross 13th St. Miller said she would like Janzen and his staff to look at page 69 of the WAMPO plan and let them know when they return to the Board how their design has attempted to implement these suggestions.

On motion by Miller, second by Roth, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to amend the agenda and table Items 3B, 4 and 6 until the June 9 meeting.

Item 5: Updates from the Director and President

Scott Wadle briefly showed slides and updated the Board on the progress of the PROS plan. He outlined the results of the citizen's survey showing the park amenities the public indicated they would like to have within the community.

Wadle outlined the top 10 activities indicated by citizens and how each rated among adults and youth. He said most citizens felt parks should be provided and maintained by the City.

The majority of Wichita residents (71%) felt that additional funding should be given to Park and Recreation programs. Wadle said during the outreach meetings they discovered the way most citizens want to provide this funding is through additional sales tax options.

Item 7. Adjourn

President Miller adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:45pm.

Janet L. Miller, President

ATTEST:

Myca J. Bunch, Recording Secretary